# YANKEE AIR FORCE NEWSLETTER

P.O. BOX 852
WILLOW RUN AIRPORT
YPSILANTI, MI. 48197

Volume 1 | December, 1982 | Issue No. 12


## INSTALLATION CEREMONY SET FOR JANUARY GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The January General Membership meeting on January 5th will be the organizational meeting for 1983. The National and Divisional Boards will take office in a short Installation Ceremony.

We will be organizing committees and beginning the sign up for the Willow Run Airshow. All committees will have a limit on the number of members including the various Airshow functions so signing up will be on a first come first served basis. Committee Chairmanships will be filled. If you are interested in chairing a committee please send a note to Dennis Norton before the Jan. 5th meeting. If you wish to remain chairman of a committee you now chair you must indicate that also. If you are not on a committee and not participating in any other way, please do your part this year by volunteering. Including the Airshow we need 300 to 400 members to fill all the positions. The YAF needs a high level of volunteer participation to succeed. Do your part.

Following are all of the present - committees or individual chairmanships. Please look them over and submit your dated and signed request.

| | |
|---|---|
| Photography | Programs |
| Membership | Hangar Rentals |
| Finance | Museum |
| Aircraft Procurement | |
| Fire Marshall | Security |
| Aircraft Maintenance | Ramp Crew |
| Retail Sales | Publicity |
| Fund Raising | Newsletter |
| Donations | Groundskeeper |
| Hangar Restoration | Hangar Maintenance |
| RF-84K Squadron | F-86D Squadron |
| C-47B Squadron | |
| Aircraft Maintenance | |
| Public Information | Office/External |
| Airshow Tickets | Airshow Parking |
| Airshow Set up | Airshow Party |

## NEW MAILING ADDRESS

Yankee Air Force Headquarters has a new mailing address: Yankee Air Force Inc., Post Office Box 1100, Ypsilanti, Michigan, 48197. Please send all correspondance to this address and change the address on all materials in your posession such as "Flight Pay Logbooks", Membership applications, official documents, etc. and pass along the new address to any person or business or othe contacts you may have who should know it. Hopefully this will eliminate the problem of lost mail.

## MID-MICHIGAN DIVISION

The Mid-Michigan Division, based in Flint, Michigan has completed its pre-conditions for Divisional Status and should be accepted as a full Division of the Yankee Air Force at the Dec. Board meeting. Membership meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7:00 at Skybolt Aviation on Bristol Rd. at Flint Bishop Airport in Flint. The Mid-Michigan Division includes Flint, Saginaw, Bay City, and Lansing.

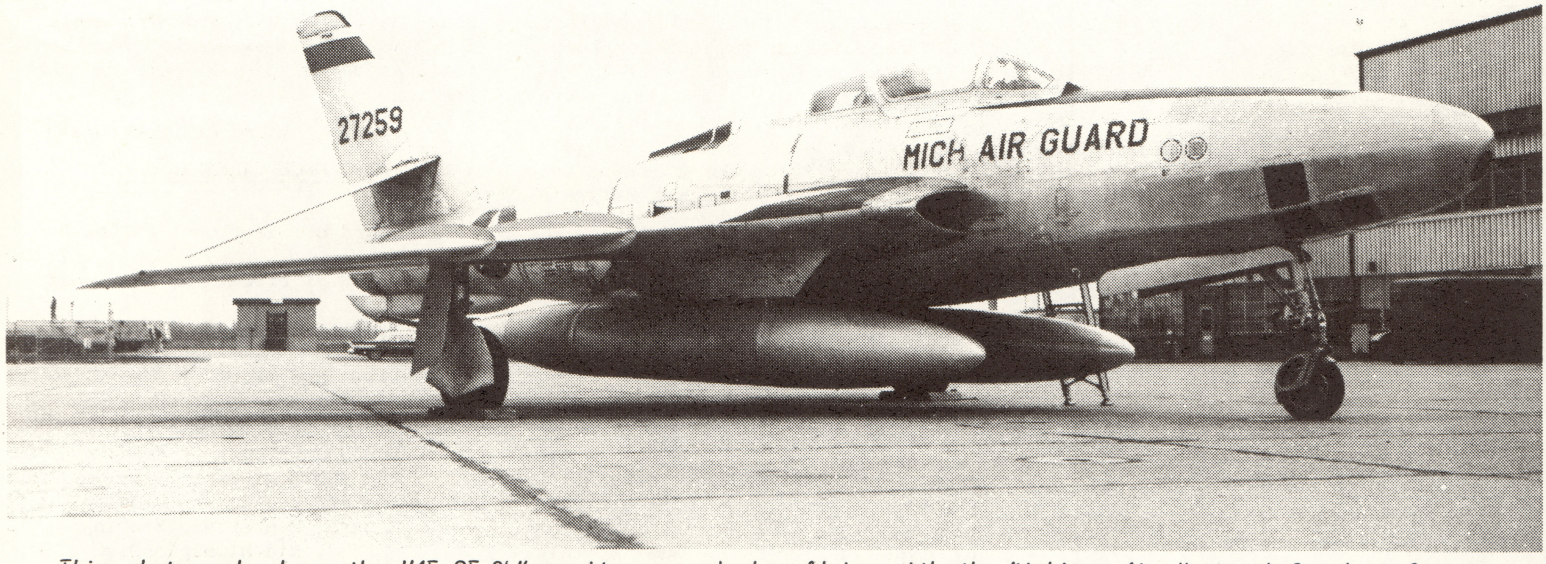
## JANESVILLE WISCONSIN DIVISION ORGANIZING

Sam Taber, YAF #850 reports good progress in his efforts to organize a Yankee Air Force Division in the southern Wisconsin/northern Illinois area. Anyone interested in helping, please call Sam at 608-752-6766.

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS MEMBERSHIP RECRUITING

Please send in your renewals before you receive a notice. This will save the YAF $300 to $400 per year. Your renewal date is on your address label.

Everyone try to bring in 1 new member during January. Recruit! Recruit!




*This photograph shows the YAF RF-84K as it appeared when flying with the Michigan Air National Guard at Detroit Metropolitan Airport about 1960.* *Photo from Selfridge Museum*

## YANKEE AIR FORCE NEWSLETTER

The official publication of the Yankee Air Force Inc.

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Editor Dennis Norton
Calendar Stan Reich
Hangar Talk Frank Modlinski
Aircraft Reports Jim Hanford
Stan Reich
Advertisements Terry Marsh

Space available for aviation related advertisements: Rates; 1" ad, $15.00 per issue or $165.00 in advance for a full year. 2" ad, $25.00 per issue or $275.00 in advance for a full year.


## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

| | |
|---|---|
| Dennis Norton, President | 482-5548 |
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| Patti Meyer, Treasurer | 439-7976 |
| Cindy Smith, Secretary | 487-5965 |
| Elmer Spencer, Director | 485-8900 |
| George Taylor, Director | 434-4753 |
| Harry Terpstra, Director | 485-3049 |
| Tom Wilkins, Director | 525-2616 |
| Phil Lundy, Director | 644-9171 |

## COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

| | |
|---|---|
| Photography, Jim Walters | 481-0320 |
| Membership, Harry Terpstra | 485-3049 |
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| Hangar, Al Bittner | 699-9215 |
| Pilot Certification, Mike LaPine | 485-7931 |
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| RF-84K Squadron Commander, Mike Willman | 661-0440 |
| F-86D Squadrom Commander, Scott Vetter | 721-3711 |
| C-47B Squadron Commander, Elmer Spencer | 485-8900 |
| Maintenance Chier, Ron Haviland | 836-5732 |
| YAF Ombudsman, Frank Modlinski | 427-5409 |
| Newsletter Ads, Terry Marsh | 434-0990 |

## SPECIAL OFFER FOR MEMBERS

The Tin Lizzie at Belleville and I-94 offers a special discount for YAF members. Just show your membership card, hat or name badge and get 2 for 1 on drinks. Ask for Sam.

*Yankee Air Force charter year Board of Directors: Front row L to R; Greg Smith, Harry Terpstra, Phil Lundy, Tom Wilkins, Elmer Spencer; Back row L to R; Patti Meyer, George Taylor, Dennis Norton, Cindy Smith.*

## AIRCRAFT ACQUISITION POLICY EXPLAINED

The primary goal of the Yankee Air Force is the acquisition and preservation of historic aircraft. Number 1 in this goal remains the B-24. Many members are asking what our progress is on the B-24. THere appear to be only 2 flying B-24s in the entire world, 1 of which is for sale for $500,000, well beyond our means at present. Another B-24 has been located in England, near flyable, available for $210,000, also beyond our means at present. These two, as far as we know are the only two available anywhere in the world. If you members wish to acquire one of these, a massive fundraising drive must be initiated, with a much higher percentage of participation than we now have at fundraising events. The choice is yours. The Board will support you if you make that commitment.

There are about ten other B-24s in the US, all in museums and not for sale. We've run down leads in dozens of foreign countries, and none have panned out. Our most promising possibility remains the country of India. We are fairly sure that there are 3-5 B-24s in India, some near flyable condition. We have been writing letters back and forth for 6 months but still haven't received the definate information we need to proceed. Through Mr. John Bowditch of the Henry Ford Museum, we are now exploring leads directly through the government of India in hopes that we can get better information. Some of the information we cannot make available because negotiations are delicate. Be assured that we are working as hard as we can on this project.

In the meantime, the Board feels that we must try to acquire other aircraft and diligently follow all leads on any type of aircraft. Out of this policy have come the RF-84K, The F-86 D, and the C-47B. The B-29 project is a good possibility, depending on the outcome of Government disposition proceedings. The board feels that this would be a valuable addition to our growing museum, because of the rarity of the B-29 (only 2 are flying in the world, and only 1 or 2 are available anywhere which could be made flyable) and its place in American aviation history. If we want a B-29 someday we must get it soon, or none will be left. It's the same problem as the B-24. There just aren't many left. Be assured though that the B-29 will not interfere with the B-24 project. If we have a choice to make, the B-24 will be acquired before the B-29. But we can try for both. If you the membership, raise the money, the board will authorize purchase of both. This is what we're all about. Its up to you. Other smallar aircraft will be purchased as they become available and funds permit. We'll discuss the B-24 purchase at the January membership meeting, so if you wish to make your feelings known please come to that meeting.

Board of Directors

## YANKEE AIR FORCE CALENDAR

DECEMBER

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 15 | Board of Directors, Willow Run | 7:30 |
| 15 | Board of Directors, Northeast Division | 7:30 |
| 25 | **MERRY CHRISTMAS** | |

JANUARY

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **HAPPY NEW YEAR** | |
| 5 | General Membership Meeting Willow Run | 7:30 |
| 5 | General Membership Meeting Northeast Division | 7:30 |
| 5 | January newsletter deadline | |
| 12 | General Membership Meeting Mid-Michigan Div. | 7:00 |
| 12 | Agenda Deadline Willow Run Board of Directors | |

# National News



**PRESIDENTS REPORT**

With this report I bring to a close an unforgettable, truly amazing year. In the past 15 months, I've watched the Yankee Air Force grow from an idea to a 1250 member (and still growing) National Organization. Every one of you deserves recognition for what we've done. Together we've accomplished nothing short of a miracle. Simply growing from a few members to 1250 in itself would seem to be an impossibility in such a short time. On top of that add the hangar acquisition and restoration, and the museum. If that isn't enough add a rare RF-84K, and F-86D and our C-47. On top of that add the Willow Run Airshow, Flint Airshow, Cleveland Airshow, Oshkosh and many other smallar airshows and fly-ins. Consider the fact that we already have 2 external divisions (Northeast and Mid-Michigan) and are getting close on a third (Janesville, Wisc.). How about all the publicity and national exposure we've had on television, radio and in newspapers and magazines nationwide. Remember our Dedication Ceremony, the Dances, the post meeting get togethers at the Tin Lizzie. Remember the cheers and tears as the YAF officers and the Wayne County Road Commissioners held the ribbon for the B-25 to cut as we re-opened the Hangar after 30 years. Remember the cheers and tears as we fired up our C-47 for the first time. I could go on but you remember these events as well as I do. Never forget them, because they are very special events to all of us and we'll never have another year quite like this one. Each of you has participated in a one of a kind project. The historical value of what we are doing will some day be priceless. Preserving this history for future generations is a truly great achievement. The unselfish dedication to the preservation of this history, from everyone from the Wayne County Road Commission to the Officers and Directors, to the Committees, to our many benefactors and to each individual member putting countless hours into the hangar restoration, is beyond my most optimistic expectations of a year and a half ago.

We've done the job. We're pretty good aren't we! But we can't sit back and enjoy without pushing ahead. January brings two seperate Boards, a division of responsibility, new officers, new goals to reach, re-organization of many aspects of the YAF to reflect our growing National and International reputation, and the beginning of the 1983 airshow season. This year will bring the opening of the museum, continued restoration work on the hangar, and if we're lucky in our present negotiations, just maybe, a B-24. Everyone keep up the work and selfless dedication and all of

(continued on page 8)

**RETAIL SALES**

As of November 1, 1982, we have some new Yankee Air Force items that you should know about. We are presently stocking B-24 Tie Tacs and Lapel Pins. They are silver in color and the cost is $6.00 each. We have V-Neck Creslan Sweaters in Navy blue with the patch on the front. Sizes range from small through extra-large. The cost is $22.00 each. Another new item, longsleeve sweatshirts. They are navy blue with Yankee Air Force and the B-24 silkscreened on the front. Sizes range from adult small through extra-large. The cost is $12.00 each. We have added a heavy weight winter jacket. They are navy blue with the patch on the front. Your name can be embroidered on the front at an additional $1.50 per jacket. The cost of each jacket is $35.00.

There has been discussion at recent board meetings about retail sales, primarily cost vs quality. I would like to comment about both concerns. Let's talk about "Quality" first. This is a prime consideration when purchasing our retail items for the YAF. I personally am responsible for ensuring that the YAF receives superior quality products. I have personally received and inspected several garments from various manufacturers and from these I choose a manufacturer, keeping in mind cost vs quality. All YAF items are American made. Foreign made products are available at less cost, but after evaluation of these products, the quality just isn't there.

Now lets talk about "cost". This is also a prime consideration when purchasing and marketing a product. I purchase some items in large quantities and receive a quantity discount. This is reflected in our pricing. Our higher cost items are not feasable to buy in large quantities due to the amount of money this club would have to tie up into our inventory. This cost also is reflected in the pricing of our products. Quantity orders would only reduce the wholesale cost on some items by about 10-15% and increase our inventory cost by 100% or more. At this time, I do not feel that we can afford to invest thousands of dollars in retail sales inventory.

This is a brief explaination of my intentions on retail sales buying and marketing. We are continuously researching manufacturers for better and a more selective product at a reduced cost without sacrificing quality. In America today, this is a difficult task. If you have any questions or comments please stop in my office on our regular membership night or send me a letter with your ideas and thoughts.

Keeping in mind that this is our last newsletter for the year, I would like to encourage you to support your club and buy a friend or relative a YAF product for Christmas. We have a good inventory on hand and the selection is wide. Enclosed with this newsletter you will find our NEW order form with all the new items listed. Please send your orders in right away so that we may get them back to you before Christmas. I would like to wish each and everyone of you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Terry Emery YAF#352
Retail Sales Chairperson

**YANKEE AIR FORCE DIVISIONS**

Headquarters Division Willow Run

Hangar 2041 (A street)
Willow Run Airport (east side)
PO Box 1100
Ypsilanti, MI, 48197
313-483-4030

Meetings 1st Wednesday of each month
7:30 - YAF Hangar

Northeast Division

Essex County Airport
125 Passaic Ave
Fairfield, N.J., 07006
201-575-9621

Meetings 1st Wednesday of each month
7:30 - 2nd floor Essex County Improvement Authority Bldg.

Mid-Michigan Division

Flint Bishop Airport
C/O Skybolt Aviation
Bristol Rd, Bishop Airport
Flint, MI

Meetings 2nd Wednesday of each month
7:00 - Skybolt Aviation Hangar

**YAF AREA REPRESENTATIVES**

West Michigan
Ed Teliczan YAF # 231
PO Box 428
Baldwin, MI 49304
616-898-2387

Boston, Mass.

Rusty Restuccia YAF#345
100 Willard St.
Quincy, Mass. 02168
617-479-4678

Sioux City, Iowa

Don Keller
3305 Chalet Ct.
Sioux City, Iowa 51106
712-276-3847

Southern Wisconsin/Northern Illinois

Sam Taber YAF#850
1211 Anthony St.
Apt. # 6
Janesville, Wisc. 53545
608-752-6766

# Yankee Air Force Flightline

## STAMPE SV-4C

The Stampe-et-Vertongen SV-4 was designed by a Belgian, Jean Stampe, who was looking for a suitable aerobatic trainer for his flying school but couldn't find any. Jean Stampe himself flew in WW I, was a military test pilot in the Belgian Air Force and was the personal pilot of King Albert. Leaving the Belgian Air Force in 1922, his search for a trainer led him to acquire the de Havilland agency for Belgium, and out of his ideas for improving the DH-60 Moth came the SV-4. The strong resemblance to the Moth leads many people to mistake the lesser known Stampe for the widely known Moth, but the Stampe will fly rings around the Moth.

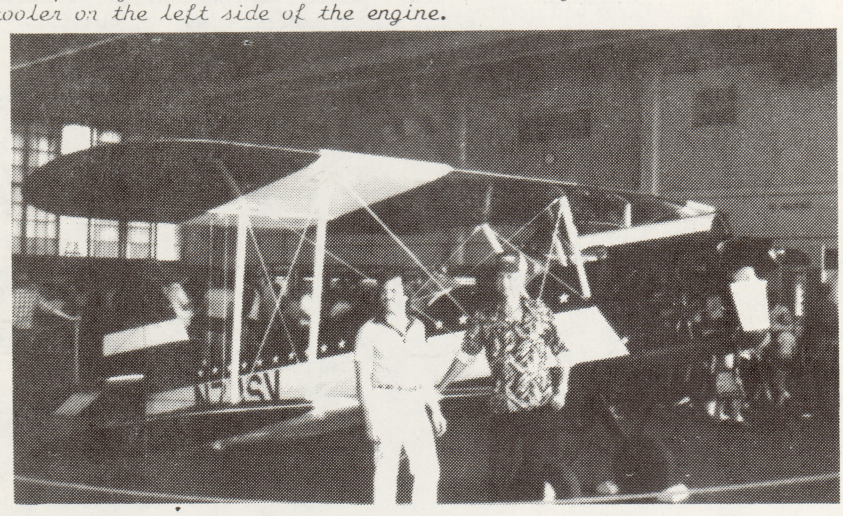
The first SV-4, with a straight wing, flew in 1932, followed shortly by the SV-4B, with the familiar sharply swept wings. The SV-4B was powered by a 130 HP British Gipsy Major engine. Orders came from both the French and the Belgium Air Forces, but the German blitskrieg soon ended production. Ten unfinished planes were shipped to England, but eventual ly ended up in Morocco where they were finished.

In 1946 Jean Stampe returned to Belgium, but found his plant in ruins. Joining with Renard to rebuild the plant, Stampe licensed the French company SNCAN or Nord, to build them in France. The French built 700 in France and Algeria for the French Air Force, while Stampe and Renard built 30 in Belgium. The French built Stampes were powered by the Renault Bengalis engine and were designated SV-4C. The Renault is a 4 cylinder inline, inverted engine developing 145 HP. From the cockpit, the engine turns counter-clockwise (backwards), requiring left rudder with power instead of right rudder. To say the least, this is an interesting (sometimes exciting) concept to learn for the American pilot.

The Stampe has a nearly symmetrical airfoil, and with four ailerons and a large rudder and elevator, is a superb aerobatic aircraft. Stampes dominated European aerobatic contests until the Zlin came along, and the British Aerobatic team "The Rothmans" flew 4 blue and gold SV-4Cs for many years.

The SV-4C is a very touchy, squirrely aircraft on the ground and is famous for groundloops and for making even the best of pilots hold their breath during landings (especially crosswind landings). This is because of the narrow gear, non-steerable, castoring 4" tailwheel, and the mechanical braking system. The brakes are applied one side at a time by applying full rudder pedal. The pilot very quickly learns to leave the brakes alone, and "fly" it all the way through the landing. Any landing in a Stampe can be an exciting affair and is not completed until the wheels stop rolling. In the air, the Stampe is a real charmer. It's very sensitive and light on the controls, and very easy to fly once the pilot gets used to this sensitivity.

*Greg Smith (front) and Dennis Norton in their Stampe, 711SV. Note the strong resemblance to the Tiger Moth. The differences are noticeable though in the tail, which is not as pointed as the Moth, the fuel tank in the center section of the top wing which is not raised above the wing as in the Moth and in the oil cooler on the left side of the engine.*



*Dennis Norton and Gary Bassett with 711SV at Selfridge in 1981 the weekend they formalized the idea of the Yankee Air Force.*

Approximately 20 Stampes are flying in the US, and another 20-30 are in various states of disrepair. The Yankee Air Force Stampe, N711SV, is an SV-4C and is owned by YAF President Dennis Norton YAF #001 and YAF Vice President Greg Smith YAF #005. It was acquired in 1978 from Jack Hanson YAF #934 of Manistee, Michigan who used to fly it across Lake Michigan to Oshkosh every year. This particular aircraft is a 1953 model and was rebuilt in 1971. The engine is a 1946 Renault 4P-03. The aircraft is in original condition and still has some French instruments and placards.

This aircraft has played a very important role in the early developement of the Yankee Air Force. Dennis and Greg acquired much of their interest in historic aircraft through this plane, and in 1980 this interest led Dennis to begin thinking about the YAF idea. In the summer of 1981 Gary Bassett went with Dennis and 711SV to the Selfridge Air Show where the Stampe was on display. That weekend, after a lot of talking, they formalized the idea of the Yankee Air Force and began a drive to get it off the ground. This aircraft was also the first to move into the YAF hangar. In June of 1981 Greg and the Stampe led the first Yankee Air Force fly-by at the Willow Run Airshow. This red white and blue Stampe is now on display in the YAF Hangar.

**AIRCRAFT REPORTS**

YAF members are encouraged to submit articles and pictures of their own historic or military aircraft for this series. Contact Stan Reich or Jim Hanford.

## STAMPE SV-4C SPECIFICATIONS

Gross Weight 1700 lbs.
Empty Weight 1100 lbs.
Wing Span 27½ ft.
Length 23 ft.
Height 9 ft.
Cruise Speed 1900 rpm. 95 mph
Cruise Speed 2300 rpm. 115 mph
Maximum Speed 125 mph
Stall Speed 40 mph
Fuel Capacity 23 gal.
Fuel flow 6 gph @ 1900 rpm
Range 300 miles
Service Ceiling 19,500 ft.
Engine Renault 4P-03, 145 HP
Crew 2- Pilot rear, passenger front

## AIRCRAFT NOW ON DISPLAY IN THE YANKEE AIR FORCE MUSEUM

C-47B WWII Transport USAAF 1945
AD-4NA Skyraider USAF 1952
F-86D Sabre Jet (being restored) USAF 1955
AT-6 WWII Trainer USAAF
PT-19 WWII Trainer USAAF
PT-23 WWII Trainer RCAF
SV-4C Stampe WWII Trainer 1953 French Air Force
RF-84 K Thunderflash (being restored) USAF 1955
Navion Trainer USAF 1949
J-3 Cub Trainer USAF/USN
AT-11 Bombadier/Navigator Trainer USAF (being restored)
Great Lakes (replica)
Aircoup

The dates listed with these aircraft are the dates of manufacture for the specific aircraft in the museum.

## PAINT SCHEMES NEEDED FOR C-47, F-86 and RF-84K

These aircraft squadrons are in need of ideas for paint schemes for their respective aircraft. Any pictures or sketches you wish to submit will be considered. We hope to have all three aircraft in shape for the air-show season this summer, so send your ideas in immediately. We also need leads on where we might get some aircraft paint donated.

Please send sketches or photos to the squadron commanders listed under committee chairpersons elsewhere in the Newsletter.

## GROUND SUPPORT EQUIPMENT NEEDED

If you have any of the following equipment, which could be donated or know anyone who has this equipment and would donate it please call Tom Wilkins, or Frank Modlinski. You might check with manufacturers, factories, schools, airlines or other aviation facilities. We need this to move and support aircraft at the YAF facilities.

| | |
|---|---|
| Low Boy Trailer | Aircraft jacks |
| gas powered APU | Pre-heaters |
| Jet starter unit | Air Compressor |
| Aircraft tow bars | Oil drip pans |
| Heavy aircraft tug | snow plow |
| Tractor with sweeping brush | |
| 4 wheel drive truck (eg. Blazer) | |

## HANGAR TALK

As 1982 comes to a close, I think, "what a great year it was for the Yankee Air Force". When I drive to the airport and walk into our hangar, it sure brings back memories of all the hard work that went into this organization during the past year.

Back in January of 1982, when snow was knee deep and I saw our hangar for the first time, I never would have dreamed that we would accomplish so much in such a short time.

We started working on January 24th, and continued every weekend. Founders and Charter members comprised most of the workers in those early days. As each week passed, more and more members showed up for work in the hangar. Our goal was to have our May general membership meeting at the hangar, and to have our Open House/ Dedication Ceremony on May 16th. We made it, and from that day on, the Yankee Air Force took-off and we have been climbing ever since.

Just the other day, I came across one of my favorite poems, and I would like to share it with you.

"High Flight"

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds
of earth, and danced the skies on
laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the
tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds-and done a hun-
dred things
You have not dreamed of-wheeled and
soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hovering
there,
I've chased the shouting wind along,
and flung My eager craft through
footless halls of air,
Up,up the long, delirious, burning
blue
I've topped the windswept heights
with easy grace
Where never lark, or even eagle flew.
And, while with silent, lifting mind
I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of
space
Put out my hand, and touched the
face of God.

John Gillespie Magee Jr.

"In December 1941, Pilot Officer John G. Magee, a 19 year old American serving with the Royal Canadian Air Force in England, was killed when his Spitfire collided with another airplane inside a cloud. Several months before his death, he composed his immortal sonnet 'High Flight', a copy of which he fortunately mailed to his parents in the USA."

"A Time to Remember"

December 17, 1903; On that day in December, the Wright Brothers, Orville and Wilber, resolved in its entirety, the problem of human, mechanical flight.

It was through their trial and error, and hard work on their experiments, that on that cold and dreary day, they actually changed the face of the globe forever.

Lest we not forget; On December 7, 1941 the Empire of Japan destroyed or damaged two-thirds of American Sea Power at Pearl Harbor.

To all my friends of the Yankee Air Force, Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.

## FUND RAISING COMMETTEE NEWS

Several activities are now being organized. A giant garage sale will be held in late March. If you have had any experience in working charity garage sales, please contact the sale chairperson, Dee Wilkie (495-1111). We will gladly accept donated merchandise immediately. Please bring your items with you on Saturdays or General Meeting nights. Please label every item with your name and a note that it is for the garage sale, and put it upstairs on the west side (museum side) at the far north end in the last room (farthest room away from the meeting room on the second floor). most of this money will be used to pay the insurance bill on the C-47 so we can fly it starting in May.

A monthly 50/50 raffle is planned. If you have been involved in this type of raffle before, we need you to organize this activity. We will also need volunteers to assemble ticket books and supervise their distribution. Please contact me if you can help.

John Schmitz - 421-2053

## HANGAR NEEDS

| | |
|---|---|
| Pipewrenches | Crescent Wrenches |
| Ratchet sets | spray cleaners |
| Metric tools | Extension Ladder |
| Staple Gun | Polyethelene rolls |
| Sandpaper | 300 folding chairs |
| Oil | 12 ft. movie screen |
| Caulk | Telephone Recorder |
| Insulation | Parachute Canopys |
| Water meter | Sabre Saw and Blades |
| Scaffolding | Florescent Fixtures |
| Fire Alarm | Florescent bulbs |
| Burglar Alarm | Regular light bulbs |
| Linoleum Tile | Electrical Wire |
| Folding Tables | Electric space heater |
| Bookshelves | 16 mm movie camera |
| Copy Machine | 16 mm projector |
| File folders | Video Recorder |
| Cabinets | Video Camera |
| Mops | Cassette Tape Player |
| Snow Shovels | Slide Projector |
| Arc Welder | Opaque projector |

continued on page 8

# Special Feature

*The following story, written by Charles Lindberg while he was based at Willow Run, was submitted by the Northeast Division. It is an interesting reflection on the man and his personal feelings about flying and the war.*

TO LIVE...

(Willow Run 1943)

Forty Thousand feet and still climbing. I am running an ignition breakdown test on the engine of a Thunderbolt* fighter. Research in the higher air is a relief from my wartime routine of conferences, production lines, and bomber shakedown flights.

Under one wing, an off-shaded patch on the great quilt of earth, is the city of Detroit. Under the other, slightly hazed by smoke, lies Toledo. The thumb of Michigan presses flat against the gray waters of Lake Huron To the eastward, Canada and Lake Erie merge into fog; while a dim band on the western horizon marks Wisconsin's shore. Almost lost in the expanse of land and water, requiring a careful search of the eyes to locate them, fine parallel and intersecting lines on a postage-stamp-size field are actually the mile long runways of Willow Run. Eight thousand feet closer to earth, edging a thin veil of cirrus cloud, an angular vapor trail shows where my ascending fighter has pierced the crystalline sky. The temperature gage registers 55 degrees below zero outside my cockpit.

At 41,000 feet, I level off, set the trim tabs, and adjust the turbo. I must hold five minutes of level flight while plane and engine settle down to normal readings. The oil temperature's at the peg again- oil's probably foaming out of the vent. Well, can't do anything about that up here. I'll let it foam as long as the pressure holds. But it'll mean another cleaning job for the ground crew. There just isn't enough air above 40,000 feet to keep an R-2800 engine cool.

Shall I try radio contact with the Tower? Not much use at this altitude-reception's bad and, with the thinness of the atmosphere, the best you can do is a word then a breath. Still, they'd probably like to hear from me. I must try to get each word's last syllable formed before my lungs run out of air. I press the "mike" button:

"Willow.....Run.....Tower.....From... Army.....Six.....Zero.....Three..... Eight.....Over." (You don't speak, you pant out the words, at high altitude.) I turn up the volume control to maximum. A voice replies in my earphones, but the words don't come through.

"***** MY **** ZERO **** EIGHT ****** OW RUN ******." That's for me, all right. Maybe they can hear better:

"Tower.....From.....Zero.....Three... Eight.....Position.....Twenty..... Miler.....South.....Willow.....Run... Altitude.....Forty.....One.....Thousand.....Out."

There are more jumbled noises in my earphones. I don't know how much of the message they received, but I'm not going to send it again. My head's already swimming slightly from the effort, and it's time to take instrument readings.

Air speed, manifold pressure, engine r.p.m. (careful; one's mind doesn't work as clearly at altitude, and each figure's got to go in the right box on the log sheet.) Oil pressure, fuel pressure... There goes the rate-of climb needle! - Left rudder; level up wing and nose; watch the turbo speed - these fighters balance on a pinpoint at high altitude. Cylinder head temperatures, base temperatures, carburetor air. The engine's a little rough on the left magneto, ambient; smooth on each mag, pressurized. Pretty good results for the new distributor heads - I might make 43,000 feet today.

All goes well until, tests run and readings logged, I start to descend. Then at 36,000 feet: something happens to the clarity of air, to pulse of life, perception of eye. I grow aware of that vagueness of mind and emptiness of breath which warn a pilot of serious lack of oxygen. I force myself to alertness - I must think or die! The idea lashes brain and body like the blow of a whip. Mask leaking? No. (A glance at the gage shows 50 pounds.) Then something must be wrong with the oxygen system. I know from altitude - chamber experience* that I have about 15 seconds of consciousness left at this altitude - neither time nor clearness of mind to check hoses and connections. Life demands oxygen and the only sure supply lies 4 miles beneath me.

I shove the stick forward. The earth slants upward and the dive begins ...35,000 feet... 34,000... my cockpit roars through the air...the earth fades out...the instrument dials darken... breath's thin; lungs, empty I'm blacking out - losing sight... I push the nose down farther...faster ...33,000...30,000...the dials become meaningless...down...down...I am dimly aware of a great shriek, as though a steam whistle were blowing near my ears...Compressibility dive?... I'm not thinking about compressibility...it's oxygen I need... I'm blind ...I can't see the needles...there are no more seconds left-it's a razor edge - a race between decreasing consciousness and encreasing density of air...

17,000...16,000...15,000 a white needle moves over white figures... its the altimeter- I can see- I'm reading its dial again - I'm aware of the cockpit, the plane, the earth and sky - I've already begun to pull out of the dive - the stick is free; the nose, rising; the seat pressing against me.

The air in my lungs has substance. Perception floods through nerve and tissue. How clear the sky is above me, how wonderful the earth below, its villages and farms, its forests, lakes and fields! They seem a part of me, not distant as before. I'm no longer confined to my cockpit, no longer imprisoned by plane or body. I become a part of all things, feeling them, being them, as well as seeing them through my eyes. What more could be desired than the pure joy of existence, the beauty of planet, sun and space? How could I have been so blinded by instrument dials and figures? How false material values are; how trivial, human problems. Simply to appreciate is more important than any material accomplishment of man.

Returning from the border of death always makes one more aware of life. Relationships take on a higher value and the senses penetrate to new depths with new perspective. I brought life rather than a airplane back to ground. My fighter was only a method of carrying it. The rows of camouflaged bombers (B-24s at Willow Run Bomber Plant - ed.) and the line of huge brick hangars I taxied past seemed unimportant. The flight report was a ruled sheet of paper to be filled in quickly. The mechanic who told me that my pressure gage read 50 pounds to high carried dull news. The oxygen tank had simply run empty at 36,000 feet. That had caused all my trouble - a quarter-inch error of a needle. I felt a sudden revulsion for such details, an impatience with needles, instruments, and readings. What fools men were to impress their minds, enslave their bodies, with figures and machines when life lay everywhere around them, free for the taking, unperceived.

My office was at the opposite end of the factory from the airfield. As I drove back, the great door of an assembly line opened and a four-engined bomber rolled out onto the concrete apron. Behind it, stretching as far as the eye could see, were dozens of uncompleted bombers. A few hours before, I would have viewed this production line as a marvelous feat of engineering. I would have

continued next page

*Republic P-47 "Thunderbolt" fighter single place monoplane, powered by one Pratt & Whitney R-2800 air-cooled engine. Armament: eight .50 caliber machine guns.

*Experiments carried out September-October 1942, at the Aero Medical Unit, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn., Dr. Walter M. Boothby, Chairman.

felt proud of even the small part I had taken in bringing it into being. Now, it seemed a terrible giant's womb, growling, clanging, giving birth to robots which were killing people by the thousands each day as they destroy the culture of Europe. Inside, crawling over jigs and wings like ants, were thousands of men and women, sacrificing sunlit hours, home and family, shop and farm, to serve this hellish monster.

This was a temple of the god of science at which we moderns worshipped. Here was the power, the efficiency, the superhuman magic of which we had dreamed. Only two years beforeon this same spot, I would have been surrounded by hickories, maples, and oaks. Scientific man could now touch a forest in Michigan with his wand, and by so doing wipe out European cities.

In "temples" such as this, the western world was prostrating itself in peace and war. For what? For material possessions, for speed, for power. Somehow man must be made to see that science was hypnotizing him with its machines, dulling his senses with its knowledge, destroying his culture with its bombs. How blind we were - how time and space misled our eyes! Here I watched a steel door lift and an airplane roll outside; while in reality, the walls of a cathedral fell and children died.

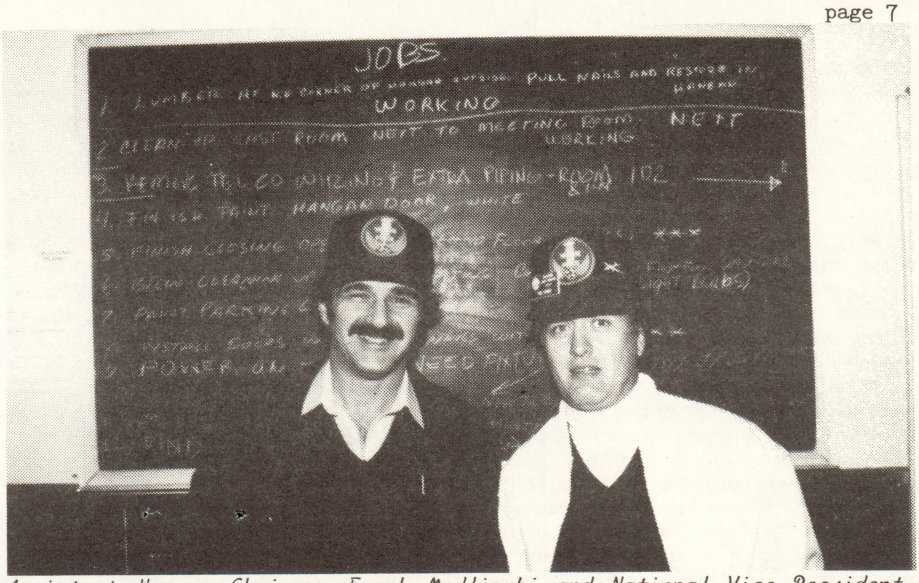
Why squander life slaving in factories, gathering technical data, building planes to fly faster and higher? Why risk death for a thousand feet of height or ten extra miles an hour? How could we further human progress by striving for such scientific goals when the very concentration on them blinded us to higher values, mocked the brotherhood of man, shielded us from God?

This altitude flight at Willow Run taught me that in worshipping science, man gains power but loses the quality of life.

OF FLIGHT AND LIFE by Charles A. Lindberg; 1948 C. Scribner's Sons.

## C-47 RESTORATION AND MAINTENANCE

Ron Haviland, Fred Lockwood and crew are really putting the time into the C-47. They have pulled all the panels engine cowling and inspection plates and are in the process of doing a complete inspection. The aircraft has been jacked up and the gear checked and wheels removed to inspect the brakes and lines. Instruments will be checked and certified and Ron is working on getting final approval for his maintenance program from the FAA. The props will have to be removed and sent in for an AD note inspection in April. The aircraft will also have to be weighed and CG calculations done. Stop out and watch, or better yet ask Ron what you can do to help.




*Assistant Hangar Chairman Frank Modlinski and National Vice President-elect Paul Kasmer at the Yankee Air Force Hangar 'Work Assignment Board' (probably adding more new jobs!).*

## YANKEE AIR FORCE FLIGHT PAY LOGBOOKS

The YAF logbooks are now available from retail sales. The purpose of this book is to record all activities which you participate in which earn "Flight Pay". The Flight Pay can be used to bid on trips in the C-47, or other aircraft, free airshow tickets and other things that the board decides to offer. This will reward members who are actively supporting the YAF, and allow you to keep track of your participation in YAF events. For instance; a member earns $5.00 "pay" for each hour worked on the hangar or other work details; $2.50 "pay" for attending a membership meeting; other "pay" is awarded for other types of participation as outlined in the logbook. Your "pay" will be recorded in your logbook and initialed by a chairman, director or officer. You can use this to bid on events or trips offered through the YAF. Trips and events will be entered in you logbook and deducted. The logbook also has phone numbers and the by-laws in it. Every member who is in any way active should have a logbook to record the activities in. In the future, only time recorded in your logbook will be honored and redeemed. Have it signed at each meeting you attend, or each work project you participate in. For the hangar workers who would have many entries, we will be setting up a new sign in procedure by name so that your time can be entered into your logbook on a once a month basis. That way you won't use up all the pages in a short period of time. If in doubt ask a board member to sign your book. Some of the events will be free to workers but others such as flying in the C-47 will be charged at cost. The time built up in your logbook allows you to bid on the right fly in the aircraft. The cost of the book is $2.00. Please don't miss any time. Start now.

## NATIONAL BOARD/DIVISIONAL BOARD

Headquarters functions are being divided up between the National Board and the Headquarters Division Willow Run board. In general, the National board will be concerned with overall policy and administration of the National Yankee Air Force. Responsibility for developing and coordinating the various divisions across the country rest with the National board. Authorization for funding major projects as well as funds will come from the National Board. The division at Willow Run will be governed by divisional regulations and will be responsible for running, restoring and maintaining the hangar and museum, all local fund raising projects, Willow Run Airshow, aircraft based at Willow Run etc. Any National function requiring manpower at Willow Run will be assigned the the Division. The National will consist of the Board of Directors and a few key chairpersons drawn from the Division. The Division will essentially be set up as it is now and function as it does now. The responsibilities which the National is taking on will greatly spread out the workload and allow the Division to concentrate on the day to day activities of the Headquarters fac ility. Anyone wishing to participate on National committees is urged to contact Harry Terpstra or Paul Kasmer as soon as possible. The regular National Board of Directors meetings will be held on the first Tuesday of each month. The Willow Run Board will continue to hold its meetins on the third Wednesday of each month.

This is a very brief, general description, and more details will be published at a later date. Watch the newsletter in January for National committee and Chairperson needs and for the listing of the National Officers and Directors.

PRESIDENTS REPORT (continued from page 3)

you new members at Willow Run, Northeast Division, and Mid-Michigan Division, get involved, be an active part of what we're doing here.

I'm always hesitant about mentioning people in the Newsletter because invariably someone is forgotten. But at the risk of doing that I must try to recognize some people and groups who have been instrumental in helping us get going this year. If I leave someone out who deserves special recognition I apologize. The Yankee Air Force's and my personal thanks goes to the Charter year officers and directors, Greg Smith, Cindy Smith, Patti Meyer, Tom Wilkins, Phil Lundy, Harry Terpstra, Elmer Spencer, and George Taylor. Not many people realize how many hours these people have put in during the 15 months since we started. Mr Claude Dukes, Mrs Grace Hampton, Mr Dan Norton, Mr Tim Ward, Mr Archie Sturdey and all the staff at the Wayne County Road Commission and Willow Run Airport. Lee Koepke, George Griffiths, Bob Kurtz, John Lynch, Max Hubrich, Burroughs Corporation, Zantop Airlines, Selfridge ANG Base, 191st FIG at Selfridge, NAS at Selfridge, Col Stone, Digger O,dell, the Willow Run Control Tower, all the committee chairpersons, George Kendall, Jimmy Barrett, WJR, WWJ, Ypsilanti Press, Ann Arbor News, Detroit Free Press, Detroit News, Howard Warren, Phil Hasell, Robert Rosenbloom, Chuck Newcomb, Glen Lamont, Larry Leaf, Jack Spanich, all the guys at New Hudson, George Yezman, Neal Sutherland, Bob Byrne, Six Star Cablevision Channel 2, Ford Aerosports Club, EAA, Michigan Aeronautics Commission, Van Buren Township, Murray Millar, Ron Egnor, all the people and businesses who have donated time and materials to us, and as much as anyone else the hanger workers. There are far too many hangar workers, (hundreds) to be mentioned, but you know who you are and we know who you are. We could'nt have done it without you guys and gals. I'm sure I've missed many names because there are literally thousands of benefactors out there, many that we don't even know about. My deepest personal thanks and that of the YAF are extended to all of them too.

It's been a great year and it has been a great honor for me to serve as your first President. Thanks for everything.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you.

Dennis Norton YAF #001
President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YANKEE AIR FORCE MEMBERSHIPS

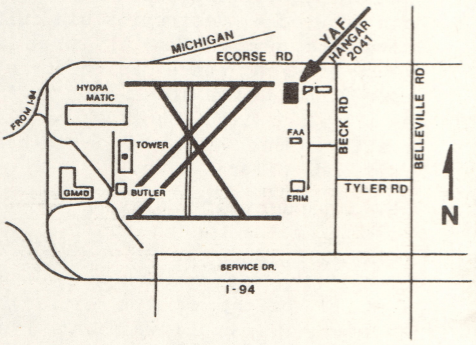
| | |
|---|---|
| Annual membership | $ 25.00 |
| Annual Membership Spouse | 10.00 |
| Life Membership (individual) | 500.00 |
| Senior Life Membership (over 60) | 250.00 |
| Corporate Membership Minimum annual dues | 500.00 |
| Initiation Fee (one time fee paid by each new member upon joining). | 10.00 |

Renewals must be received within 30 days after expiration or individual must rejoin as a new member.

HANGAR NEEDS (continued from page 5)

| | |
|---|---|
| Gas Welder | Acetylene Torch |
| Deep Freezer | Propane Torch |
| Color TV | Suspended Ceiling |
| Filing Cabinets | Spray Paint Guns |
| Record Player | Tape recorder |

New members (and old members) here is a way you can help. Find for donation any of the above items. Remember they are all tax deductible. Check with businesses, factories and friends.

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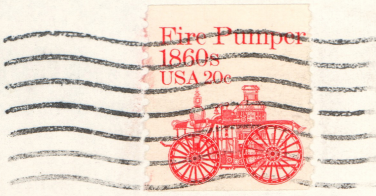


YPSILANTI HISTORICAL MUSEUM
**
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MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE YANKEE AIR FORCE